

and you better go home now, you're pretty loaded."

The next day there was silence, and more silence, but I knew inside that I had blown the job. Premonition time.

About a week after that, I was summoned into a plush office I'd never seen before. The man? He was the guy who hires and fires art directors, assigns work. He was polite, awkward.

"It's not that we don't like your work, but we really just don't have that much for you to do around here, Fran. We've been hiring so many people during our big creative change, that..."

Why beat around the bush? "Okay, you're firing me, please don't make excuses." I was insulted. "How much severance pay are you going to give me?"

He choked up. "Oh, uh, two weeks, you'll get two full weeks."

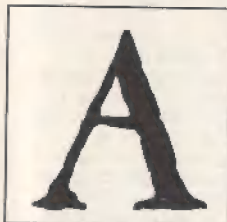
"The hell I'll get two weeks. You can call my lawyer in the morning. I'll leave his address and number with your secretary."

"What?"

I explained about breach of promise and that kind of thing, and he straightened up. My lawyer, smart and sweet, made a nice settlement out of court and I got enough money to pay my way to London and back, and maintain my expensive new apartment for a couple of months.



8. Don't cry, I'm a cunt.



ALL THE WAY ACROSS THE OCEAN I kept telling myself that I had finally got away from the advertising scene, the bar scene, and the noise, even if it was only for a couple of weeks. When I arrived in London I checked into a veddy grand English hotel, which I knew I wouldn't be able to pay for, but I only had one suitcase, so it wouldn't matter.

By the time I finally flopped on the bed, it was midnight London time, but only about five p.m. by my body, so I split for an all-night club called the Bag O'Nails. Somebody had told me it was where the biggies hung out.

When I got there, it reminded me a lot of Malkin's in New York, except there was live music, and the people were more at ease. I headed for the ladies' because I knew from my bar scene days, that's where you get the straight goods on what's happening. I met a lovely red-haired freckled Scottish girl named Gina who offered me a place to stay, which was cool, because I couldn't really afford the hotel.

The next morning, I called Apple, and ended up making a date with one of the slaves who worked there. We met Friday at the Speakeasy, a basement club, very elegant and dark. There was a dining room in the back, upholstered with Superstars, Freaks, Faces.

The most interesting human being there was Paul's brother. He was so disarmingly sweet that I gave him my silver-art-nouveau-Village roach clip.

Which was maybe a little dumb, because I wasn't sure that he even smoked. But he definitely had those big sad Medici eyes that seemed to go all liquid when they were given an extra bit of attention. Since he had changed his name to McGear, the McCartney legions of groupies were not going ga-ga over him. Neither was I, but even in that sleek hip atmosphere, he stood out. The reason he stood out was that he was a real man, capable of understanding himself, and willing to be vulnerable. I hoped Paul would have some of these qualities.

That weekend I went to Gina's *sans* luggage, since I couldn't pay the hotel bill, and moved in. It was a cold water

flat in Notting Hill Gate with a slot for a shilling to put in the meter. I hadn't realized how cold one could be, until I bundled up and had to wait while she went out for change, or until I had to use shillings to get hot water in the tub we shared with all the other tenants on the floor.

Somehow Monday rolled around, and the strange feeling of being in a really foreign country began to sink in.

I went to Wigmore Street, despite the fact that the girl on the phone told me that Paul was out of town, or very busy.

I thought, well, you've come this far, he has to be there. I know he's there. So I went, and he was there.

He was standing ten feet from the receptionist's desk. I watched him turn around when the girl whispered my name into his ear. I felt the electricity, but it wasn't from the male-ness, the animal masculinity of Robert, or the wry sophistication that Harry had; he was exciting to me only in an odd cerebral way. I could see he was terribly well protected, and that he was moody and evasive. I looked at him hard and wondered,

"Is this it? Is this the guy that millions and millions of chicks are moaning and groaning over? Writing letters about and masturbating about, and dreaming about?"

He came over and looked at me, and he probably sensed that I was full of ideas. He was curious.

I gave him the treatment for Richard's story, a picture of me to make sure he remembered who I was and a very respectful and formal letter. He dimpled and laughed as he asked me where he could reach me.

I left Sassoon's address, and the next day while I was there having my hair cut like Mia Farrow, someone handed me a letter, with bold black type along the side, "95 WIGMORE STREET."

I ripped it open. It was a handwritten note, signed love, with intriguing hints, empty slashes. I called him immediately. The note had said, "Come, call, do something constructive."

He knew from the beginning that he didn't have to vamp it up with the Liverpool giggly accent. He had the voice of someone who could be a great mimic.

"When are you coming over?" he said.

"Whenever you want me to. How about right now?"

"Well, where are you?" he asked with a slight Irish over-tone.

I floated into his reception room, and he came out to meet me, hands in the pants pockets of a baggy French suit. He was ready to start the play.

He nodded me into an office, not his own, and put his feet up on a big desk. "Am I impressing you now, with my feet up on this big desk?"

"Oh, yes, well sure, I'm impressed, are you happy now?" It was almost as if this was the first time anyone had seen him alone, in a business situation.

Suddenly there was no more small talk. The questions poured out of him. What did I want to do? What about the record business? What should we do with your treatment? How did you make a movie?

"Tell me what to do," he said. He *meant* it!

But when I tried to tell him, he interrupted, "Franny, where did you get all that gray hair?" I have these white threads and they've been getting more noticeable in the black since I was 18.

It dawned on me that he was more interested in flirting with me than in the movie. I had to make up my mind. Which would I rather do, have the picture produced, or be with him?

I had no time to think it out. He seemed to have a plan all his own. He said apologetically that he had a date with his solicitor, and would I like him to drop me off at a nice place for lunch.

We walked on the street alone together for the first time, and the sun could not block out the way people stared. As if we were in a glass cage, and couldn't see them. We got into a cab, and he immediately started talking about acid. How he hated losing control.

While he rapped, I glanced out to see a crippled chick, all broken and bent over, and he stopped.

"What are you looking at?"

I said, "It's the same everywhere isn't it?"

"Yes," he replied, seeming pleased with this new mutuality of awareness and went on, "I want a complete itinerary for you, I want to know where I can reach you at all times, twenty-four hours a day." He smiled the cosmic smile. I called his secretary after lunch and she put me right through, saying Paul was expecting my call.

"Hi, I'm sorry I can't see you any more today, but I've got these terrible meetin's. And I have to go away tomorrow. Will you be all right till I get back?"

"Sure, I'll be all right." Then I thought what the hell did he mean by that? Was he testing me to see if I'd ask for bread?

Then he used a favorite expression of mine, "I'll see you later." When a man says that, I usually want to scream. It always means tragedy, or at least a lot of waiting.

So he went away, and a month went by. I wrote to him in

Scotland, but he never got the letters. He was with his fiancée, Jane. He had been to New York, with John, and had met my sister, though I didn't discover this until I'd moved into my own flat.

I'd gotten some money from a young millionaire, and I hadn't even had to bull him to get it. He'd been really sweet. I used the money to rent a flat in Chelsea. I hung around there most of the time, having gotten tired of hanging around Chelsea digging the freaks. They were a little like the sandbox New Yorkers, only they had more style. I met one called Peter Slemming who was really a friend, and we spent lots of times together, going to movies, and drinking.

The phone rang, finally. *He* said hello and I said hello and I thought it was someone else. He said, "No it's *me*." The Great Me, who had met my sister.

"What did you think of her?"

"She's the *nicest nymphomaniac I ever met*."

"Now you're embarrassing me." I hoped she hadn't.

"No, she looked good. That's nothing to be ashamed of."

"I'm sure you were a perfect gentleman. Now what are you doing?"

"Shining my shoes," he answered.

"That's good. Every good boy should shine his shoes. When are you recording?"

He excused himself, and as if the other three were sitting there digging the whole conversation, yelled, "Hey fellas, when are we recording?"

He came back to the phone. That evening. Eight, Abbey Road, EMI studios. Could I make it? Could I ever. Opening the big double doors to the cavernous studio, I caught a frieze of four Beatles, gathered around a grand piano, four owls, gazing with half-amused looks at me approaching.

Paul was wearing his tightest and sexiest dark green pants; no more the baggy businessman, now the rave-up rocker.

He seemed taller, ready for the music, and I had to reach up when he asked me to massage his shoulders.

At the beginning, I huddled in a corner, digging Yoko's sweetness, but by the time the hash and goodies were out, I was dancing to a pulsing "Revolution." The music filled the flesh, and was alive all by itself, carrying us along into the night.

I sang backing with George, smiling and doing a Ray Charles falsetto. There was much laughter and electricity, and a covering cloud of incense.

The chauffeur drove John and Yoko and Paul and me to his house, and they disappeared behind the black gates, Paul still

strumming "Wait and see, wait and see." The chauffeur drove me home.

I fell onto the pillow still throbbing with the "Revolution" beat. The moon lit up the Avedon black and white panorama, hung above my fireplace, and I flashed: *they were from another planet, and not real at all*.

I thought about how badly I wanted to get there, behind those black gates.

A few more sessions, with too many visitors, and I was not sure anything would ever happen. I wrote him an illustrated note saying, "Dear Mr. Plump, I think I'm going to have to go home soon. When Am I Going To See You?"

That evening the session was canceled, and I called him from the studio.

"I'm disappointed. I wanted to talk with you."

"Tomorrow will be better," he said mysteriously.

So Sunday, when I went down the stairs to get some milk, I discovered a telegram, "MAKE IT MONDAY, MR. P." Zapped!

Monday morning, in the bathtub, curlers entwined in hair; the doorbell screamed for attention. I ripped the rollers out, powdered my nose, and ran downstairs in my culotte pajamas to let him in.

He settled right into a chair, with me on his lap. The eyes were bigger than ever, and the kisses started on the neck and worked their way into more interesting places. The sheepdog followed us into the bedroom to watch.

He was brown from sunning himself up in Wales at his brother's wedding. Pink cheeked, he fell asleep after, and I lay there looking at his face, not sure how to make it seem more real.

He hadn't been terribly good or terribly bad. He seemed to rush into it, as if thinking about it too much would mean he wouldn't make it.

After breakfast, we visited friends in the country and ran barefoot in the rain.

The lady of the house took me aside, and said meaningfully, "Be thankful for whatever time you have." I looked at her, puzzled, and then understood what she meant. She was probably right, I thought. It might be exhausting, but it would be good.

I didn't expect his goodbye to be qualified, but it was. About eight p.m., the light still pink and fading, his paranoia rising, he said, "Don't take this seriously."

"What?"

"This goodbye."

I didn't hear from him for eight days. This time he showed up at five o'clock in the morning. I ran down to the door. He needed a shave, and looked forlorn and spaced out of his mind. He ran me up the stairs like before, half-singing, "It's F-Day, it's F-Day."

As he was pushing me back into the pillows, moving, dancing over me, I looked at his face, and asked, "Are you in love with me?"

He just whispered, "I don't know. I don't know, I don't know." I wondered if he had had a fight with the girl. I wanted more definition to it. I wanted to confront him and so it started to get a little crazy.

I wasn't really in love with him. His nervous aura was almost coy, but after bullshitting around with myself, I went to the studio.

During the tea break I struck up a conversation about contraceptives. He had never asked me if I took the pill, as if he wanted chance to decide our future.

He said we would go to his house after the session. I waited, and soon it was three a.m. and we stumbled out into the dark, past the forlorn and patient groupies.

Sitting in front of the fireplace, watching him light the fire with his metal fire-gun, I laughed inwardly, remembering the shillings I'd put in Gina's meter. He poured us a drink, and began to unwind, talking, almost melodramatically, about himself. It all seemed to lead inevitably to the writing of his saddest and most beautiful song, the one about his fiancée who wouldn't give him what he wanted most of all. Now he had chosen me to confirm his doubts about her love.

"That's not where it's at," I said. His eyes searched mine in a tender helpless way.

"Where is it then, do you know?"

"If I were your lady, nothing would be more important to me than your happiness, I mean that, and that's where it should have been for her."

He hardly paused. "Do you think you could take care of me?"

"I don't know . . . we are so different. I'd be glad to try."

He stood up, smiling, and held out his hand. He led me up the stairs to the giant dark room, and we flopped on the immense lonely bed.

"I bet she's with someone else right now," he sighed.

I left a note for the maid not to knock, or wake us up, and we slept till eleven when I performed the daily ritual of making

and serving him hot tea in bed. Climbing the stairs with the tea and morning papers, having snatched the bundle through the mail slot past the peeping groupies, I thought maybe this was the beginning.

The sunlight in England is quite different from California. It's not hard and yellow like New York. It's very, very soft, and drifts over you the way the air in some gardens has a way of doing. I woke in that sunlight, morning after morning, when Paul left one of the heavy velvet curtains open on the wall nearest the bed.

The house was immense, but every inch was filled with his insane being, from the elaborately painted door, and rainbow piano in the studio, to the tousled uncut grass in the garden.

I stayed there, exploring it like I would have explored a doll house, that day, and answering the phone. He went straight from the office to the studio that day, and by the time he got home it was three in the morning, with a full moon.

Before I knew it, the front door creaked, and he and Martha were nuzzling me as if I belonged, not needing words, but just touching with velvet fingers, and kissing warmly. I forgot what we talked about. I think we got stoned and listened to Indian music, and had a lovely time in bed.

It's not important sometimes if a person isn't particularly good in bed. He had his hang-ups, and I think he felt sometimes that he wasn't manly enough. His body was sweet, and beautiful, with almost undetectable curves in it. Nothing to get hung up about, and one could be happy, if one didn't demand too much, or even want too much. The relationship had begun on his "save me" lament, not on a rush of sexual flashes. But he seemed to have so many minds, that untangling the hang-ups in each one would take all the energy in me.

He hadn't formally dumped Jane and so at first I was a secret. I stayed in the house for weeks, cleaning, reading, calling the dope dealer. I was to score for my old man. You'd think he could have taken care of it, but he didn't.

When I started to get restless, he noticed, and just at the right moment, sent me to work in his elaborately constructed playhouse called Apple. My boss, the darling slinky Derek, was the extra dash of erotic intelligence that I needed to face the confusion I was surrounded by. He was surrounded too, of course. He'd been surrounded since he started with the Beatles almost ten years before.

After a drunken lunch with Derek, I would go home to find Paul sleeping, make tea, and if things were tolerable, we would rap. He would have breakfast outdoors on wooden picnic tables,

smiling a little because he was surprised that I could cook well.

The phone rang occasionally. Sometimes it was easy to tell Jane was on the other end. He would get very uptight, very awkward and phony. I simply gritted my teeth, and realized that this wasn't a one or two week shack-up now. I didn't know what I wanted next, or why I was slaving at keeping him happy. He would look at me sometimes as if he believed I might perform a miracle on him.

One sunny afternoon, about five-thirty, my friend Peter from Bath dropped me off, and when I got inside the big white kitchen door was closed and I could hear a pathetic scratching sound, a puppy. He looked like a silky, gray moustache running around loose. His name was Eddie. His papers were on the mantle in the living room.

I played with the puppy for just long enough to start thinking "What ever happened to my movie treatment? Where did this animal come from, and what does the dog mean?"

Paul burst in, still in his executive posture. He said he'd bought the dog for Jane when they were living together.

"We're going to keep him. What's for dinner?"

Eddie wasn't housetrained, and Paul wouldn't let me train him.

On sodden drunk nights, he sometimes got very rough with the dog, and I thought that was quite schizo. With five cats, the sheepdog, and Eddie, I was constantly cleaning up shit, and shit looks like shit, even on an Oriental Rug.

After dinner, the rain came down. Paul was silent, then animated and weird.

"You'll have to go. I've got to have this talk with Mrs. Asher."

The Amazon mother had shown up on two evenings when Paul was at the studio, opening doors with her own keys. She lugged suitcases and boxes full of Jane's things down the stairs to her station wagon. She oozed hostility. The first time, I sat frozen to the couch in my robe. The second time, I asked her if there was anything I could do, and she must have sensed my apprehension. The mother in her came out and, together, we packed cookbooks and art books. She was very hung up on her terrific daughter in a way that reminded me of how my own mother would have acted.

She wrote Paul a note, and sealed the envelope in front of me. I ran upstairs, shaking, threw my dresses into a bag, and walked slowly down to Paul.

He caught the suitcase, and searched my face, puzzled.

"Why are you taking your things?"

"You said I should go. I'm going to my flat in Chelsea."

"Okay, if you want. See you later."

I went home, freaked out, sat by the phone in the dark, tried to sleep, back to the phone. Hours were weeks. When the phone finally rang I thought I was hallucinating.

"What are you doing?" he said lightly. The pussy-tease.

"I'm sitting here twiddling my thumbs, dummy, of course. I'm waiting for you to call me."

"Well, you can come home now." He was serious.

"Give me an hour." It was raining, and cabs were scarce. I flew into the bedroom, raped the closet, and tried to find a taxi. My Chelsea hang-around pals saw me on the street and smiled. With the bundles of clothes, and my radiant looks, it was obvious why I was jumping up and down for joy. The taxi appeared out of nowhere, Cinderella's pumpkin coach.

At "home" my ward and keeper was crooning to himself in front of the fire, a vision of the out-of-sight in repose. For the first time, he was Paul to me. Vulnerable, even weak. But he was trying.

He talked about everything but Mrs. Asher until we went to bed. I couldn't take it anymore.

"Come on Paul, what happened?"

He was sad, but a little proud. He sounded as if he had turned over these words in his head many times before.

"I've told her that I've met a girl who's offering me something Jane never could, that's all."

It sounded like enough. It was what I needed, and at that moment I began to trust him.

Every day of that summer was crammed with events, large and small. Never a moment's break at the center of the Beatle manor. I worked from 10 to 6. When I got home I would cook something quick for whoever might be there. That could mean any one or all of George Harrison, Mal Evans, Derek Taylor, Paul's middle-aged cousin from Liverpool, Zsa Zsa's daughter Francesca Hilton, the list could go on. It seemed like just as I was catching my breath, he'd be waving goodbye to me at the front door.

People would pop in from the studio until after midnight to get guitars, or dope. Sometimes the groupies got out of hand. One time they managed to dognap Eddie, and Mal had to go to the police station to get him back. The girls insisted they wouldn't release the dog unless Paul came. I talked to them on the phone, and somehow they returned the poor thing. Paul was less upset than I was.

When the traffic stopped, I'd play records, light the fire,

and play the piano or harpsichord (Open Your Heart To a Nice Jewish Girl). Martha and I would roll and romp in the long soft grass, listening to the latest mix of "Hey Jude" (there were four or five) on the turntable.

More often than not, I would just be falling asleep around two in the morning when John and Yoko and Paul would crash in, show films, or play tapes from the session. If he wasn't in a good mood, he'd drink hideous scotch-coke combinations, throw food at the dogs and cats, drop his clothes in a path from the door to the bed, and ignore me completely.

Sometimes, we'd go to a club, have a good time, then zip home for the ephemeral thing we substituted for lovemaking.

He wasn't happy. But the big things that were driving him mad were beyond me. He kept on working and writing, but when John came over, all *he* could talk about was how much he loved Yoko. That disturbed Paul. In spite of John's obvious happiness, Paul stifled his jealousy with not-very-cute bursts of racist crap.

He cruised Jane's house, and rang her from the phone in his Mini. She would say, "Sorry, I've got somebody here." He would creep home in a rage, and take it out on me. He never hit me, but he didn't have to. He could be harder than a diamond in solid granite, and just as cold.

Good times made up for those nights, just barely.

Like the night we went to Revolution, and Terry Doran, one of his old friends, told him he should marry me. It put Paul in a reckless mood. We walked through Regent's Park, climbed through the bushes and found a leaky rowboat. Wet, fooling around in the dark! When we got home we were muddy from trying to leap over the bushes round the park.

He was in the bathtub when I stuck my head in the door to check him out.

"KNICKERS DOWN" he roared, pulling me into the water to splash and make crazy sounds, rub each other pink.

Then there was the night we stood in front of Buckingham Palace at 4 a.m. watching the sentries change, stiffly in formation. We talked about the Queen, and he seemed like a college kid, pushing his beautiful nose between the bars for a closer look. We drove round and round the Victoria Monument, and then steamed up to a certain park that stays open all night. We climbed up to the top of the highest hill, looking at lights, catching our breath, whistling and waiting for echoes, answers. A springy rain began, although mid-summer had come and gone. Halfway down the hill, we melted into the grass, and I watched

his round cheeks get pink, his little boy mouth pursed into a pleased ooo. We were making love somehow between our clothes in the rain-spattered grass, beyond all reason.

It might have been merely young and awkward, but our feelings were too uneven to enjoy even then. He was petulant, outrageous, adolescent, a little Medici prince, powdered and laid on a satin pillow at a very early age. People would come up and pat his ass, as it were. You had to admire him for putting up with it, and understand the difficulty of straying from this spot to take a woman.

By the end of July, I was a smudged little secret, even when we were out. I wondered how he could expect it to stay out of the papers for long. I had been seen playing a duet with him at the studio, drinking with him in Mayfair.

I keep saying how he was, how he was. How was I?

Sometimes, in awe. He was so pretty.

He bitched when I gazed at him while he was driving.

But he never bitched when I went down on him at 90 miles an hour, on the road.

WHY DON'T WE DO IT IN THE ROAD? In the road. Long, lush road to Liverpool. We celebrated crazy dawn trips with wine, grass, sandwiches, jellies. He even tried to snap a picture of us together while he was driving. ("Put your head on my shoulder, camera at arm's length.")

I never had any advance warning about those trips. He'd just come home and shout, "Pack a basket, and my bag, we're going to the Pool!" His father missed him so, and begged me to make Paul telephone more often.

When we finally made it to his home city, we acted very proper, sleeping in separate rooms. But the first trip was painted black with Jane's public announcement of their broken engagement. The reporters swarmed the house, and I had to hide while Paul got rid of them. It put him in a poisonous mood, and so did the hundreds of pictures of Jane that were spread all over the dining room table. We hardly spoke. He sang and played for his father, a salty old guy who seemed tremendously sensitive. In the afternoon, Paul would work on "Jude," making the house ring with melancholy.

He had a hard time staying sober up there, and we traipsed under the Mersey to the city to drink with his cousins and pals. Singing in a Liverpool Pub could be fun. Even the autographs he gave were in good spirits. But he wasn't wearing it well. He just wanted to be one of the boys, but he wanted to be the one-man band as well.

The next time we went back, the trip was full of pain. He

was drunk as hell, playing the piano at a party given *around* him in a shabby little house. He slipped away to a pub one of his cousins owned, without my seeing. His cousin came to me sweating bullets.

"You had better fetch your fella, Clancy." (That's the way Paul had introduced me.) I walked down the street smelling disaster. He was backed up against the mirror behind the bar, red and swollen with self-pity, self-contempt. A bewildered crowd of cousins surrounding him.

"You don't treat me like I was me. You treat me like I'm Him, and I'm not Him, y'know. I'm just me!"

I took his hand as gently as possible.

"Come home, love. Come home."

When we reached the cobbled street, he fell down on his hands and knees, pounding his fists into the pavement.

"IT'S JUST 'TOO FUCKIN' MUCH, THAT'S ALL. I CAN'T TAKE IT."

He was hysterical.

"What can't you take?"

"THE MONEY. IT'S THE DAMNED MONEY. I'VE GIVEN THEM A FORTUNE AND THEY NEVER EVEN PAID ME BACK A SHILLING. THEY EXPECT IT!"

"How much have you given them?"

"About thirty thousand pounds." I thought that was a small sum for him to get hung up about, and, anyway, weren't these people his family? Yes, his family. I understood.

"Maybe they're afraid you'll lord it over them if they talk about it."

He shook his head, and I raised his chin to wipe the tears away.

When we got back to Birkenhead, where his father's house beckoned sleepily, he sobbed hopelessly on the floor, while the dogs climbed all over him. I waited till he was tucked in bed, completely asleep before leaving him.

In the morning he pretended not to remember, and wouldn't let me remind him, to get it out clean and straight. His trouble was deep, and nothing I said could set him straight.

The road back to London was slicker than a sealskin rug, and the rain came in buckets. We had saved some grass, which I'd cleverly rolled up in the garden before we left. We got totally zonked, and I asked him some wild questions, like "Do you ever think consciously of the power you have to communicate with millions of young people?"

His eyes stared ahead, blanks.

He stepped down hard on the gas, as if he could speed away

from his demons. I thought for sure we would run right off the road and die right there. Paul was so full of changes, it wouldn't have surprised me in the least. Fortunately, a cop pulled us over and tried to write out a speeding ticket while Paul tried to charm him out of it. There was grass all over the floor, but the cop couldn't stop staring at Babyface.

Paul delivered a piece of Beatlecharming bull about how the cop didn't really have to give us the ticket, how we could all be friends if we tried, and the policeman smiled engagingly. He took a second look at me. I must have had a stupid stoned smile, because he handed me the ticket fast, as if he didn't want to think twice about what had really been going on in that car.

At dawn we pulled into our driveway and found four or five groupies waiting. He ignored them, but one climbed over the wall after we got inside, and knocked timidly on the door. In broken English, she begged for an autograph and he gave it. Then we collapsed till the middle of the afternoon. I gave the speeding ticket to Peter Brown, his creepy flunky at the office. Peter stared at me with a small smirk. Also with a little more respect than ever before. If I was good enough to be taken home to Dad, I was good enough.

If only that were true.

In spite of Paul's long talk with his father about how he needed a different kind of girl we were like a pair of unmatched shoes. He had wildly fluctuating moods, desperate curiosity. I was bewildered, working overtime at a job I couldn't even define.

One consolation: Yoko Ono Lennon. She and John moved in with us while their story was still something to hide. As the two of us cooked breakfast for our respective men, she'd rap with a kind of new, feminine wisdom about how hard it was to make them happy. She was fighting her own battle staying sane amidst racist attacks from the Apple cock-and-cunt garden. She was also opening up her wealth of strength and determination to John. All the same, she confided in me that she didn't believe any relationship could last more than seven years.

John, Yoko and I would watch the "telly" through the evenings when Paul was out raving and drinking and getting it up for God knows who. The three of us felt young and weird and relaxed, and talked about how we could save the company if only it could change direction, motivation. I was amazed that John never said a bad word about Paul's management capabilities. Especially when Paul put thumbs down on *Two Virgins*.

Yoko made opium cookies one night, and the three of us sat staring at each other, waiting for something to happen. It never

did, but that was one time when John read through my giggle to the sadness of waiting up for Paul.

"What are you worried about? Someone had to get the scissors, and it was Her," he remarked.

If there had been something John and Yoko could do to help me get Paul's head straightened out, they surely would have done it. I asked John why Paul didn't do a solo album. It would've seemed the logical outlet for all the ego crap he was laying down at the studio. John half laughed and said, "We thought of it a long time ago. It was going to be called *Paul McCartney Goes Too Far*. But he wouldn't do it. He's too hung up about us bein' Beatles, y'know."

John obviously loved Paul enough to let him run wild if it would help ease the tension Paul was creating in the studio and at home. Yoko could see it, too.

But Paul was treating *them* like shit too. He even sent them a hate letter once, unsigned, typed. I brought it in with the morning mail. Paul put most of the fan mail in a big basket, and let it sit for weeks, but John and Yoko opened every piece. When they got to the anonymous note, they sat puzzled, looking at each other with genuine pain in their eyes.

"You and your jap tart think you're hot shit," it said. John put in on the mantle, and in the afternoon, Paul hopped in, prancing much the same self-conscious way he did when we met.

"Oh I just did that for a lark . . ." he said, in his most sugar-coated accent.

It was embarrassing. The three of us swiveled around, staring at him. You could see the pain in John. Yoko simply rose above it, feeling only empathy for John.

I was sad to see the Lennons go, even though it took pressure off Paul. My daily routine went back to the old chaotic one, and there was no one to share my feelings with, except the animals.

In the morning, I'd sit out in the back yard, sucking a joint to death, glaring up at the house where he slept.

In the evening I'd chase away the groupies, who were, for the most part, a twenty-four-hour drag. When a bunch of them chased me down the street as I was walking home, I understood at last the ambivalent feelings of the Beatles. To be chased down the street when you're tired, or trying to think something out, can be more than a little annoying. You have little to give them.

Paul let two of them sleep in the garage one night, and in the morning they walked me to the bus stop.

"How is he, how is he?" they asked in funny Brooklyn accents.

"Moody as hell. A bitch in the morning, mostly."

"Ohhh, love it, love the MOODS," said the pudgy one. She reassured me that the house groupies liked me better than Jane, who was snotty and wouldn't talk to them at all.

As for my old man, he'd have me call the cops on Sunday mornings when the squealing outside bugged him, but half an hour later, he'd be up at the window, pecking through the curtains to see if they'd come back.

I was getting tired to the bone, and lonely. Paul's enthusiasm for Apple was shrinking. Even the recording sessions were strained. He came home drunk on the nights they had recorded a John or George song. Often, I'd get a confused harangue, straight from the darkest corner of his mind, about how women *like* to be treated rotten. He said he had hit Jane a couple times, and found her more turned on by the pain and tears than his tentative sexual approach. After each of these little mind-busters, he'd look to me for an explanation. He expected a transformation to take place, and I was helpless.

The only time he ever mentioned Linda, the girl he later married, was during a discussion of how hard it is for "people" to make contact with each other. He said he had "made contact" with her right after he met me.

"So why isn't she here when you're so fucked up? Why don't you send for her?"

"I want to try it with you," he said, a little wistfully, knowing he had not given me the evenest of breaks.

If that was a declaration, the effort never came clear. The next night, we left Revolution, the club-of-the-month, and drove to some girl's apartment. He left me sitting in the car while he went upstairs to fuck her. I wanted to rip off the Aston Martin and drive until it broke down. I was stockpiling humiliation.

When he returned, about fifteen minutes later, I was burning.

"Why did you do that? Why the hell couldn't you take me home first?"

"I don't know," he answered, and I could tell he was a little sick inside about it too.

It was no wonder he felt shitty most of the time. His diet was basic Liverpool slag. Beans and toast, grilled cheese and tomato sandwiches. Lots of Scotch and Coke. A hideous drink that gets you two ways: bombed and fat. His jowls were getting pretty pudgy after a while.

And the mysterious little uppers. I'd find them in the

pockets of his jacket, as I picked through the house for his night trail. When I asked him what they were, he shrugged, looking away from my eyes, saying, "Oh nothing, someone at the office gave them to me. I don't use them." He was and is a lousy liar. I was hurting for him when I found those whites, and left the lie standing.

I got a bit rounder and weaker too. The cook eats her own food. And suffers for it.

Being not-quite healthy, I couldn't handle the hostility from the office people. Except for Derek Taylor and Jeremy Banks, they were the worst bunch of ass-kissing, cocksucking creeps I had ever met. They hated me for being close to Paul, and feared me because they knew I'd tell him whenever they screwed up. Paul had been threatening to clean house, and before I left just about did.

From the other three sides, that of John, George and Ringo, it looked like his ego trip might just destroy the whole structure. Ringo would rather have quit the band than go through Fat-Face McCartney's daily torture trip. So Fatso turned into Honey Pie, and Ringo stayed.

George saw it all, but chose to be happy and go along until later. He saved me from utter freakout several times. He enjoyed teasing Paul. One afternoon we were in the back seat of the limousine, George in the middle, on a photo session which consisted of two Beatle limos, several photographer limos, and assorted better halves. George and I shared a joint, the only willing dopers in the car. We giggled, snuggled up, and finally George started rolling up his orange and green-striped pant legs. Paul, who up to that moment, had been trying to stare out the window, sat up straight and barked disgustedly, "George . . . what are y'doing?"

George kept looking at me and smiling. "I was just turnin' Franny on to m'knees." I laughed so hard that nothing mattered any more.

September was coming, and the rain never seemed to stop. Indoors and out, Paul and Francie stayed at close psychic distance, even though they couldn't touch fingertips emotionally. I kept him from himself, promised him I would stay until the absolute end, and got sick.

He waited on me for the first time, a rough nanny but a kind one. He was still angry about the day Jane came over. We had been asleep (at least *he* was) and she walked right in and knocked on the bedroom door. He whispered disdainfully, "Who is it?"

"Jane."

He was out of bed in a minute, grabbing the midi coat that always hung on the back of the door. He looked like a gay flasher. I could almost hear Jane breathing. I dove under the pillows until the soft talking sounds grew a bit louder. Then I peeked through the second door and saw them walking down the stairs, silent.

Into the bathroom, out on the balcony I climbed. He was walking across the courtyard, grouchy. Then he spotted me, and yelled, "Get back in the house, Clancy."

I was back all right. When I got in bed, I could feel the flu in my cells. He took one look at me, and ran back downstairs to mix a hot boozy steaming drink. I drank it down and passed out with his concerned face on my mind. When I came to, clammy and white, he was downstairs, and the carpets were damp from the morning shampooing.

I stumbled downstairs, knowing what this day would bring. It was completed, over. The things he said were stupid and petty, and I was far too weak to fight back. And I thought about home as a refuge from his defensive put-downs.

The mystic shell had been broken. I had been initiated, and would have to keep his secrets well. The Answer: yes, he is (they are) different from all other human beings. But their limits had been seen, at least internally.

One never knows whether a man is from outer space until one has loved him. There were a million girls that summer who wanted to fuck Paul. But not enough who wanted to love him.

I can't say that I ever liked him, but how do you *like* a superstar? Bullshit, he never wanted it, he just knew it was there.

Maybe it was his blind boyish faith that something would come along and make it all better that drew me to the challenge. The impression he left was a continuous high level of nervous energy, not easily lived with. I left unceremoniously after a night-to-day turnabout.

As he climbed into bed, he gentled me to sleep, saying, "When this LP is finished, I'll take you to the farm, and we'll rest."

"Oh, please mean that."

"That's what I said. I promise."

In the morning, everything was different. My American accent was wrong, my looks were wrong, everything was wrong.

The afternoon brought tears, and he came into the kitchen to catch me saying a tearful *Hello Goodbye* to my mother. He wrapped me in his arms.

"Don't cry. I'm a cunt. I'm going out for a while, will you make dinner?"

I made dinner, with my head high, and in the morning, I packed and took a taxi to the accountant, getting just enough for a taxi to the airport and a coach seat on a flight back to New York.

I had the flight home to think and the long weeks afterwards, too, at my parents' place in Newark. I retreated there for the fall.

Life in New Jersey was the exact antithesis of everything I'd found exciting in Paul's exclusive London. I'd lived in an invented, enclosed world, hidden with Paul in large houses, recording studios and limousines. Now I was shut away in Newark, not moving from the apartment, trying to forget everything.

But forgetting Paul McCartney wasn't that easy. First of all, there were the reporters. However hard Paul had tried to keep me out of the papers (and away from whom?), the reporters had gotten onto us and run a couple of stories. One evening Paul had suddenly decided to go down to Apple and paint the storefront windows white. Nobody saw us leave but by the time we had fingered *Revolution* and *Hey Jude* in wet paint on each of the windows a few reporters had gathered outside, wanting to know who I was and were there any truths to the rumors.

Next morning the *Daily Sketch* ran two half-columns headed "Paul and Francie paint the town white." Witty. Keen-eyed newsmen must have picked that item up here because when I got home to Newark the phone didn't stop ringing, with reporters wanting tidbits about Paul, the Beatles, Apple. I wanted the phone cut off but it wasn't my phone. After a week of telling them there was no story, I just hung up each time.

There was also the radio which played "Hey Jude" about eight times every day. I'd been with Paul at the studio the evening he listened to the final mix. After he'd fixed the tape and arranged everyone in position to listen to the masterwork, he'd come over to sit beside me, putting my head on his shoulder and nuzzling me like a teenager. When the tape was finished, he said, "I still can't hear it," as if he was telling me he couldn't hear his own messages to himself.

Since it was the first few chords that spooked me worst I soon gave up even bothering to turn off the radio when it played the song.

I shared the loneliness and emptiness of those first months at home with Harrie, my sister. She'd done her best to make every mistake that I'd made. Harrie had just got back from California where she'd been running after a third rate movie star. He looked like James Dean, only with longer hair, and had an irritating habit of saying "y'know" all the time. He epitomized

everything I found dull and boring in American men, but Harrie was nuts about him.

So nuts that she'd almost sent him over to London while I was there for me to try him out for myself. He'd called me at my apartment in Chelsea, telling me Harrie had given him my number. We ate dinner that evening with his wet little agent and all through the meal he kept giving me these passionate cornball looks, straight out of *True Romance*. He made love exactly like a gym teacher.

Once back in the U.S. he'd left for L.A. Harrie followed him out to California, sent him telegrams, got no reply and came slinking back to Newark in silent defeat. We spent months huddled together there like animals holed up for the winter.

Most of the time we slept but when that became too much of an effort, we'd read paperback novels or watch television. Sometimes we'd watch for whole days without saying anything. The only thing that broke this routine of total withdrawal was when we'd waddle out of our rooms to talk with each other.

"You're so lucky, Fran," my sister said one time, "you know so many really groovy people and you've done so many really groovy things. There can't be many chicks who've done all the things that you've done."

From the first sentence I'd been laughing to myself. "If the people I know are so fucking great and groovy then what am I doing here?" I asked her. "Name one of the groovy people who've ever done anything for me. I haven't come away from most of them with even a friendship left over. Maybe friendship's not meant to have anything to do with it. Maybe we're both meant to be champions of lovemaking for its own sake."

"If it's just fucking," Harrie replied gloomily, "then I'd rather check into the funny farm."

Harrie possibly took this choice seriously because one evening a few days later she tried to remove herself by swallowing a whole bottle of Somnux. As soon as the pills were safely inside her, she rushed into the living room and announced dramatically that she was about to die. I fixed her a vomit-shake which she refused to take, so we drove her to the olive green emergency ward at Newark General where her stomach was pumped.

Soon afterwards she volunteered for a tour of duty at Roosevelt Hospital (my alma mater). My parents couldn't stand seeing her moping around all day doing absolutely nothing and maybe coached her a little with the decision. Harrie felt it was a fair trade for working as a receptionist.

One evening soon after Harrie had left, I was watching

television, alone and mindless. Paul and Linda's wedding flashed on the screen. I watched them pushing their way through the crowd of sobbing groupies outside the registry office. If he could treat her like a human being, even with her lousy American accent, I thought, then he might make it after all. This was the third time. He had to make it work, or else he'd go raving queer and kill himself.

As these thoughts were going slowly through my head, the phone rang. It was my father. He wanted me to get up and make myself look sensational. He was bringing home one of his clients, a salesman from L.A., called Bill who looked like George Harrison.

"He'll be staying over just for tonight. Will you fix yourself up?"

"I don't know," I said, "I'll see how I feel."

I locked the door to my room and hid there, pretending to be asleep when anyone knocked. I was hiding from life, hanging on to the familiar melancholy of failure.

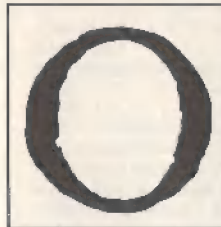
But in the morning when I met him at breakfast I realized how I'd forgotten what it was like to flirt with a good old garden-variety man. He reeled off a list of his possessions: a racing green Morgan, a border Collie and so on. He was no genius but he made me laugh. We made a date for the following week in New York.

We got very drunk in an elegant bar, gobbled dinner somewhere and went up to an apartment of one of his friends. For almost four days we balled, hardly bothering to get up, let alone leave the building. Bill kept telling me he was standing up a married chick to ball me. I wasn't particularly interested in his reasons. All I knew was he got me off.

Still, when he decided, on Tuesday morning, that he had to get back to L.A. to work, he began brooding mysteriously. He finally told me he wanted me to come along and be his "what-ever" on the West coast. He looked at me as he said this like someone gazing at an object in a shop window. I can't remember exactly why but I decided to go with him to L.A. I had no reason not to. I'd found a man after being alone for too long. Besides, I was fed up with Newark.



9. All we ever do together is smoke and fuck.



ONCE BACK IN L.A. I began trying out my post-Beatle fingers on a number of different surfaces. I spent that spring and summer split between various men, beginning with Bill, moving on to Michael, his best friend, with side orders of Harry, the rat from New York, along the way.

I moved into Bill's house and got a job in a small advertising agency. I

stayed with him for almost two months, discovering again what it was like to live with a man. In the evenings I'd make him weight-watchers meals, go shopping or go to the laundromat, sometimes to the movies. It worked well as a sort of recovery period but by the time March came around I was more than restless.

Bill was turning out to be another Jewish momma's boy, who never wanted to go out, and just wanted to stay home and be waited on. It was the first time a woman had ever kept house for him and it blew his mind. I'd had enough of pussy-whipped men before I was nineteen. I was approaching twenty-six and wanted something different.

The difference was Michael, Bill's best friend. He'd introduced me to Michael and Joan after I'd arrived in L.A. Michael was one of the most erotic men I'd ever seen. He came across immediately. He didn't have to move or open his mouth to let you know he was turned on. He'd been with Joan for over five years but they still weren't married, which puzzled me a little, since Joan was obviously a tough lady who could get what she wanted if she wanted it. All through the first evening we were together, Michael sent me psychic messages and Joan ignored the performance, as if to tell me, "He does this all the time, but it doesn't mean a thing."

It was Joan who helped break whatever hold Bill and I had over each other. She called me one afternoon to accuse me of "balling her old man" the day before. Actually, I'd given him an A-1 blow job a couple of weeks back. Just as I was screaming into the phone, "I'd never even dream of screwing Michael," Bill walked in. He stomped around the room, swearing he'd never see either of them again.